



King County

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News Release

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King County seeks public input in developing permanent East Lake Sammamish Trail

Plans are under way to upgrade King County's wildly popular interim East Lake Sammamish Trail to a permanent trail that is wider and accessible to more user groups.

"Our goal is to build an outstanding trail that will serve as a community asset for decades to come," said Gina Auld, project manager. "The interim trail has proven to be extremely popular with many user groups, and we want to add on this success by building a first-rate permanent trail."

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on proposed trail designs was published today and is available for public review. King County will host a public hearing as part of the DEIS formal public review process, Nov. 9 from 5 to 8 p.m. in Auditorium N-201 at Bellevue Community College, 3000 Landerholm Circle SE in Bellevue.

The interim trail, which was dedicated in March, is 10.6 miles long and connects the cities of Redmond, Sammamish and Issaquah. The interim trail ranges in width from 8 feet to 12 feet. The trail surface is constructed of compacted gravel atop the existing rail bed and is not appropriate for thin tired road bikes, inline skates and most wheelchairs.

The DEIS details a number of permanent trail options, ranging from a fully paved trail that is at least 12 feet wide to a "no action" alternative that would keep the current interim trail until 2015 when the trail could be closed.

This range of alternatives reflects the substantial public input provided over the past seven years through neighborhood workshops, public and agency meetings and the Citizens Advisory Group.

The preferred alternative proposal calls for a fully paved trail with a separated soft-surface strip or wider soft-surface shoulder for pedestrian and equestrian use where

possible. The trail would be located primarily on the railbanked corridor that is already owned by King County.

Other proposed features include new parking facilities at three sites, new restrooms and drinking fountains at two locations, traffic and trail etiquette signage and fencing for trail user safety and to identify and protect sensitive areas.

“The public meeting and comment period present a great opportunity for the public to review and comment on this proposal,” Auld said. “Our design and construction decisions will be shaped by the public review process, and will reflect King County’s solid stewardship of the public’s resources.”

Project costs range from zero under the “no action” alternative, to an estimate of more than \$68 million for an alternative that involves development outside the railbanked corridor (all estimates are in 2004 dollars). The preferred alternative could cost up to approximately \$35 million, a price that would be spread out over roughly three to five years of construction.

Copies of the DEIS are available for review at the Seattle Public Library main branch in downtown Seattle, plus the Bellevue, Redmond, Sammamish and Issaquah public libraries. The DEIS can also be viewed online at <http://metrokc.gov/eastlakesammamishtrail>.

Anticipating a large turnout, oral public comment at the hearing will be limited to two minutes per speaker. Public comment can also be provided in writing at the hearing, submitted via e-mail at fmd.sepacomments@metrokc.gov, or mailed to Gina Auld, project manager, King County Facilities Management Division, King Street Center, 201 South Jackson St., Suite 700, Seattle, WA, 98104. Comments will be accepted through Dec. 19, and will be addressed as part of the final EIS report.

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